NO. 24
MAR 1991
$1.50 US
$1.85 CAN
80p UK

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

IN WHICH LUCIFER'S PARTING GIFT ATTRACTS UNWANTED ATTENTION; AND THE DREAM LORD RECEIVES UNWELCOME VISITORS.

the SANDMAN™

SEASON OF MISTS 3

gaiman jones russell

Asgard:

IN THE HIGH HALL OF GLADSHEIM THE LORD OF THE AESIR SITS AND WAITS FOR THOUGHT AND MEMORY TO RETURN TO HIM.

AT HIS FEET TWO WOLVES ATTEND HIM.

LACKING THOUGHT AND MEMORY, HE COULD NOT EVEN NAME THEM. THE FLOOR OF THE HIGH HALL IS MUD, SCATTERED WITH RUSHES.

HE SITS AND WAITS, THE GALLOWS-GOD, THE ONE-EYED KING OF ASGARD.

THERE IS A FLUTTERING OF WINGS.

THE GHOST-BIRDS RETURN TO HIS SHOULDER.

AND INSTANTLY HE ***KNOWS***; HE KNOWS ALL THEY'VE SEEN.

HUGINN AND ***MUNINN***: ***THOUGHT*** AND ***MEMORY***.

AND HE ***SMILES***, THE LORD OF THE GALLOWS.

AT *LAST...*

THE MEAD HE DRINKS IS NOT THE MEAD OF THE AESIR. IT IS ***HIS*** MEAD, BREWED BY DWARFS FROM DEAD KVASIR'S BLOOD; A DRAUGHT OF LIQUID VERSE AND MADNESS.

IT IS THE MEAD OF ***ODIN***, THE ***ALL-FATHER***, AND ***NONE*** BUT ODIN MAY DRINK OF IT.

HE DRAINS THE GOBLET. AND HE IS ***GONE***.

CONVERSION BY WILDSTORM

THERE IS A CAVERN BENEATH THE WORLD.

(THIS IS ***TRUE***. YOU MUST KNOW IN YOUR BONES THAT THIS IS TRUE, ALTHOUGH ALL LOGIC ARGUES AGAINST IT.)

THERE IS A CAVERN BENEATH THE WORLD, AND IN THAT CAVERN A ***MAN*** IS ***BOUND***.

IN THE CAVERN THERE IS ***ALSO*** A ***WOMAN***, AND A ***SNAKE***.

THE SNAKE IS HIGH IN THE DARKNESS OF THE CAVERN, CURLED AROUND AN ELABORATE ROCK FORMATION.

THE WOMAN IS CALLED ***SIGYN***.

THE ***SNAKE*** HAS ***NO*** NAME.

THE WOMAN HOLDS A BOWL ABOVE THE MAN'S HEAD.

(DRIP. DRIP.)

THE SNAKE'S VENOM DRIPS FROM ITS OPEN MOUTH. IT FALLS INTO THE BOWL.

THE MAN IS BOUND WITH THE ENTRAILS OF HIS SON.

(THEIR SON.)

(THE WOMAN IS HIS WIFE.)

THE BOWL FILLS GRADUALLY WHEN IT IS FULL, THE WOMAN EMPTIES IT INTO A PIT.

WHILE SHE IS GONE, THE SNAKE'S VENOM DRIPS ONTO THE MAN'S FACE.

HE *TWISTS* AND *WRITHES* AS THE POISON EATS INTO HIS FLESH. HE *SCREAMS* AS IT ENTERS HIS *EYES*.

WHEN HE WRITHES, THE *EARTH* QUAKES.

HE CURSES THE WOMAN, BUT STILL SHE STAYS WITH HIM.

THE *MAN*.
THE *WOMAN*.
THE *SNAKE*.
THE *BOWL*.

IT'S NOT NICE, OR PRETTY; BUT IT'S *TRUE*.

AND IT'S *NECESSARY*.

IT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A *VERY* LONG TIME.

ENOUGH.

SNAKE, HOLD YOUR VENOM.

WHY...

WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE... GLAD-OF-WAR? TO GLOAT AT MY... MISFORTUNE?

TO... PASS THE TIME...?

NO, LOKI SKY-WALKER. I HAVE COME TO TALK WITH YOU.

AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I...HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO YOU?

EH, BLOOD-BROTHER...OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT WE MINGLED OUR BLOOD? THAT YOU SWORE...ON YMIR'S BONES...THAT WE TWO WERE ONE FOREVER?

LOKI WOLF-FATHER... IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY OTHER WAY, DO YOU NOT THINK I WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT?

BUT, FREE, YOU WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO ALL OF US. YOU ARE TOO CLEVER, TOO WILY, AND TOO MALEVOLENT TO BE UNCONFINED.

IF I AM SO CLEVER... WHY AM I STILL... BOUND HERE?...EH, BLOOD-BROTHER?

RAGNAROK HAS NOT YET COME, LOKI.

IT HAS BEEN SAID: "THAT LOKI WILL BE **BOUND** UNTIL **RAGNAROK**, WHEN THE **FIMBULWINTER** WILL FREEZE THE WORLD, WHEN GREAT WOLVES WILL **EAT** THE **SUN** AND THE **MOON**, WHEN THE **GIANTS** WILL RIDE TO **WAR** ON A SHIP MADE OF DEAD MEN'S NAILS..."

"AND ON THAT DAY LOKI WILL BREAK HIS BONDS AND FIGHT HEIMDALL, AND THEY BOTH WILL DIE." I KNOW THE OLD TALES AS WELL AS YOU, GALLOWS-GOD. **SO?**

IT NEED NOT HAPPEN, LOKI.

PERHAPS **ASGARD** WILL BE DESTROYED. BUT **WE** CAN BE **GONE.**

GO? GO **WHERE?** TO **JOTUNHEIM**, WHERE THE **GIANTS** LIVE? TO **SVARTALFHEIM**, WHERE THE **DARK-ELVES** HIDE? TO **NIDAVELLIR**, WHERE THE **DWARFS** TOIL?

ALL **THOSE** PLACES WILL **FALL** AS **ASGARD** FALLS.

TO THE HELL OF LUCIFER.

HAHAHAHAHA! WILL YOU GO TO WAR AGAINST THE **FALLEN**, ODIN? **OHHH**, YOU HAVE BECOME **SENILE**, OLD MAN...

NO. NO WAR. LUCIFER HAS... **ABDICATED.** HIS DOMAIN LIES **EMPTY:** A PROTECTORATE OF THE DREAM-WEAVER.

IT COULD BE **OURS** FOR THE **GRASPING.**

AHHH.

I **NEED** YOU, LOKI.

YES. **YES,** YOU **DO.**

I AM **WITH** YOU, THEN, ODIN. FOR **NOW.**

AND THEY ARE GONE.

STRIPPED OF THEIR FUNCTION, HIS LOVERS WAIT, IN THE CAVERN BENEATH THE WORLD.

THE WOMAN.

THE SNAKE.

WAITING FOR *HIM* TO **RETURN.**

The Dreaming:

I am back.

ARRWK?

SEASON of MISTS: Chapter 3

In which Lucifer's parting gift attracts unwanted attention; and the Dream Lord receives unwelcome visitors.

NEIL GAIMAN Writer • KELLEY JONES Penciller • P. CRAIG RUSSELL Inker • DANIEL VOZZO Colorist • TODD KLEIN Letterer • TOM PEYER Asst. Editor • KAREN BERGER Editor

featuring characters created by Gaiman, Kieth and Dringenberg

ERR.

DID YOU WIN?

No.

WAS THERE A FIGHT?

DID YOU GET THE WOMAN YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

DID LUCIFER GIVE YOU ANY TROUBLE?

No, no and no.

SO WHAT HAPPENED, LORD?

I'll tell you later.

Asgard:

AND YOU *TRUST* HIM?

NO. I DO *NOT* TRUST HIM, THUNDER GOD.

BUT I *NEED* HIM.

AND I NEED *YOU* TO KEEP *HIM* FROM BETRAYING US *ALL.*

WELL? AREN'T YOU *PLEASED* TO *SEE* ME? IT'S BEEN TWELVE HUNDRED *YEARS*, COUSIN.

I AM *NO* COUSIN OF *YOURS*, LOKI WOLF'S-FATHER.

AND IF YOU TRY *ANYTHING*, TRICKSTER, I WILL *SPLIT* YOUR *SKULL*. I WILL *SMASH* YOUR *BONES.*

I THINK THIS WHOLE AFFAIR IS *ADDLE-HEADED.* BUT I WILL HARNESS MY GOATS.

ON, TANNGNOST! ON TANGRISNI! TO DREAMLAND!

AYE! TO DREAMS!

The Dreaming—:

The Key to Hell?

EXACTLY. IT'S YOURS, NOW.

PERHAPS IT WILL DESTROY YOU, AND PERHAPS IT WON'T.

BUT I DOUBT IT WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE ANY EASIER.

Order:

SHIFT [HAS] OCCURRED [IN] [THE] BALANCE. PRISTINE DOMAIN [HAS] OPENED [UP]. HASTY REACTION [IS] NEEDED.

[IF THIS IS TRUE] WHAT [DO YOU] COUNSEL?

APPOINT [AN] EMISSARY: [THE] DREAM KING [IS] VULNERABLE. HE [WILL] CONFER [ON US] [WHAT] [WE] COVET.

THERE [IS] MUCH [WE] [CAN] PROFFER [TO HIM].

WHO THEN [WILL BE] AMBASSADOR?

KILDERKIN OF ORDER.

KILDERKIN OF ORDER?

YES.

Chaos:

A SHIFT HAS OCCURRED IN THE BALANCE. A NEW DOMAIN HAS OPENED UP. WE NEED TO ACT FAST.

HAS OPENED UP

SO? ST? FAST. SHIFT.

O? SUGGEST?

SUGGE

AN ENVOY: THE NIGHTMARE-KING IS PLIABLE. HE WILL GIVE US WHAT WE WANT. AN ENVOY: THE DREAM-LORD IS VULNERABLE. HE WILL GIVE US WHAT WE

THERE IS MUCH WE CAN PROVIDE HIM.

WHAT DO YOU THERE IS MUCH WE MUCH WE CAN OFFER HIM.

WHO THEN?

WHO WILL BE OUR ENVOY? BE OUR ENVOY? EN WILL BE OUREN WILL BE OUR ENVOY? EN WILL BE OUR MESSENGER? EN WILL BE OUR ENVOY? ENVOY?

SHIVERING JEMMY.

OF THE SHALLOW BRIGADE?

ISHE SHALLOW BRIGADE? WHE SHALLOWL.

SHIVERING

T ISHE SHALLOW BRIGADE? BRIGADE? ALLOW BRIGADE?

BE OUR

OF CHAOS

THE SAME.

IT IS WELL.

The Dreaming:

My sister. I stand in my gallery, and hold your sigil. Will you talk to me?

HIYA, BIG BROTHER. WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*

BUT MAKE IT *FAST*--I'M IN KIND OF A *HURRY.*

My sister...

...once, you berated me for not calling on you when I had a problem.

And now, I have another problem; and I am coming to you for advice.

SHOOT.

Shoot?

I *MEAN*, TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG.

Mm. Shoot. Yes. I went to Hell, sister. To free the woman Nada...

I KNOW. YOU WENT TO *HELL*, AND YOU FOUND LUCIFER HAD TURNED *EVERYONE* OUT...

You know?

OF COURSE I KNOW. AND HE GAVE YOU HELL. THE MOST DESIRABLE PLOT OF PSYCHIC REAL ESTATE IN THE WHOLE ORDER OF CREATED THINGS, AND NOW IT'S ALL YOURS.

So what do you advise me to do?

DO? HOW SHOULD I KNOW? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? OPEN A SKIING RESORT? TURN IT INTO A THEME PARK? SELL IT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER?

IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

YOU'VE GOT THE PLACE. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH IT?

I do not know.

YOU'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT. AND SOON, I HOPE.

LOOK, I HAVE TO RUN. THERE'S A WHOLE CAN OF WORMS OPENED UP HERE, AND NO ONE ELSE SEEMS TO BE DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

I'M DOING WHAT I CAN...

...BUT THE DEAD ARE COMING BACK, LITTLE BROTHER.

THE DEAD ARE COMING BACK.

FAR BELOW THE SILVER CITY THE UNIVERSE GLITTERS AND GLISTENS, LIKE A CHILD'S TOY; FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT GALAXIES COIL AND GLEAM LIKE MULTICOLORED JEWELS, DISTANT NEBULAE FLICKER AND PULSE.

THE SILVER CITY.

IT CANNOT BE VISITED.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY WERE CREATED IN THE SAME BREATH AS THE CITY ITSELF, IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE TIME.

BEFORE THE FIRST DAWN, THE SILVER CITY WAS.

IT IS NOT PARADISE.

IT IS NOT HEAVEN.

IT IS THE SILVER CITY, THAT IS NOT PART OF THE ORDER OF CREATED THINGS.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY POSSESS NAMES, AND IDENTITIES. PERHAPS THEY POSSESS SOMETHING WE MIGHT RECOGNIZE AS FREE WILL; PERHAPS NOT.

NOW TWO OF THEM TAKE WING.

DUMA: ANGEL OF SILENCE.

REMIEL: WHO IS SET OVER THOSE WHO RISE.

TOGETHER THEY SOAR: ABANDON THE SILVER CITY, ABANDON THEIR CONTEMPLATION.

THEY FLY TOGETHER IN PERFECT UNISON, SHINING WINGS BEARING THEM EFFORTLESSLY ACROSS THE VOID.

TWO ANGELS.

FALLING TOWARD THE WORLD.

Limbo:

WE ARE OUTCASTS!

WE ARE EXILES!

WE ARE THE DISPOSSESSED!

FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE BEEN DOWN-TRODDEN.

NO LONGER!

BROTHERS. SISTERS. OTHERS. ALL OF US. AT THIS MOMENT, IN THIS OUR TROUGH OF DESPAIR, IT MAY SEEM LIKE THE GREATEST SETBACK WE HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED.

BUT IT IS THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY!

YESTERDAY, WE WERE CREATURES OF HELL. TODAY WE ARE HOMELESS, BANISHED TO THIS DREAR LIMBO.

BUT TOMORROW-- OH GLORIOUS TOMORROW! --TOMORROW WE SHALL HAVE HELL AGAIN AS OUR DOMAIN.

BUT THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT!

NO LONGER WILL WE BE IN THRALL TO A FALLEN ANGEL. NO LONGER SHALL WE BE VASSALS OF SOME SHIFTING TRIUMVIRATE.

THIS WILL BE A NEW HELL. A FORWARD-LOOKING HELL, THAT RECOGNIZES INDIVIDUAL WORTH; IN WHICH A DAEMON CAN RAISE ITS HEAD--OR ANY OTHER IMPORTANT MEMBER-- HIGH, AND SAY:

"THIS IS MY LAND.

"AND NO ONE IS EVER GOING TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME AGAIN."

AZAZEL! AZAZEL! AZAZEL!

TODAY, I WILL GO TO THE DREAM-KING, AND I WILL DEMAND HE GIVE US--RETURN TO US--THE LAND THAT IS RIGHTFULLY OURS.

AND I WILL NOT GO ALONE.

WITH ME WILL GO THE MERKIN--SHE WHOSE WOMB SPAWNS SPIDERS. THE MERKIN HAS BEEN MY AIDE IN WAR AND PEACE.

SHE WILL BE INVALUABLE IN CONVINCING THE DREAM MASTER OF THE WISDOM OF OUR CASE.

AND CHORONZON--ONCE A CREATURE OF BEELZEBUB'S--AND MOST FOULLY BETRAYED BY THAT SHIFTY DUPE OF LUCIFER. NOW ONE OF US...

UNTIL THE END OF TIME, PRINCE AZAZEL.

THE DREAM-CREATURE WILL OF COURSE ACCEDE TO OUR WISHES. HE MUST SEE THAT HELL IS OURS BY RIGHT! HE MUST RETURN OUR LANDS TO US.

BUT IF HE FAILS TO SEE REASON, WE HAVE SOMETHING TO HELP HIM MAKE UP HIS MIND.

HE IS A REASONABLE BEING, AFTER ALL.

AND HE WILL BE WILLING TO TRADE.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, LITTLE MISS NADA?

The Dreaming.

KAAARK!

EVE? YOU THERE?

MATTHEW. WELCOME BACK. WHAT NEWS?

OF THE **BOSS?** NOTHING REALLY. HE'S **STILL** HIDING OUT IN HIS **SUITE** IN THE **CASTLE.**

HE WON'T **TALK** TO **ANYONE.** NOT EVEN **ME.**

HMPH. HE'S LIKE A LITTLE **CHILD.**

OH--AND HE'S **MOVED** THE **CASTLE** TO THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN.

HE'S EXPECTING UNWELCOME **VISITORS,** THEN. HE **ONLY** DOES **THAT** WHEN HE'S FEELING **ANTI-SOCIAL.**

I'M **SURE** THIS WILL SORT ITSELF OUT. THESE THINGS USUALLY **DO.**

I **HOPE** SO. I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM **THIS** OUT OF IT **BEFORE.**

NO. BUT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN WITH US **LONG,** LITTLE RAVEN. HE GETS **BLACK MOODS** ON HIM SOMETIMES.

WORSE THAN THIS ONE SOUNDS. **MUCH** WORSE.

IS THERE ANYTHING **WE** CAN DO?

OF **COURSE,** MY DARLING.

WE CAN **WAIT.**

...Go away.

MY LORD?

WE HAVE *VISITORS*. AT THE *GATE*.

MY LORD, THERE ARE *MANY* OF THEM.

Tell them... to go away. I am not... receiving visitors... at this time...

BUT THEY ARE *ENVOYS*, MY LORD. I RECOGNIZE A *FEW* OF THEM. SOME HAVE BEEN HERE *BEFORE*-- AS *HONORED* GUESTS.

SOME OF THEM ARE *GODS*. *ALL* OF THEM ARE *PUISSANT*.

WE *GATEKEEPERS* CANNOT KEEP THEM *ALL* OUT, SHOULD THEY *TAKE* IT TO *FORCE* THEIR WAY *IN*.

NOT UNLESS YOU LEND US *POWER*, LORD.

NOT UNLESS YOU LEND US *STRENGTH*...

Enough.

WHAT SHALL WE *DO*, LORD?

Let them in.

...TELL YOU AGAIN, IF YOU DO NOT OPEN THIS FARTSUCKING DOOR, THEN MY HAMMER MJOLLNIR WILL *SMASH* IT INTO *TOOTH-PICKS!* HAH!

I AM THE MIGHTY *THOR!*

I HAVE *SPOKEN* TO MY *LORD.* HE *APOLOGIZES* FOR THE DELAY, AND BIDS YOU ALL *WELCOME.*

HE WILL *GREET* YOU IN HIS *THRONE ROOM.*

ENTER, AND *ANNOUNCE YOURSELVES.*

I AM *ODIN ALL-FATHER*, OF THE *AESIR*. WITH ME ARE MY SON *THOR*, OF THE *AESIR*, AND *LOKI SKY-WALKER*--THE CHILD OF GIANTS, BUT *AESIR* BY RIGHT OF BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD.

WE *SEEK* THE *KEY* TO *HELL*.

I AM *ANUBIS*, LORD OF THE DEAD OF THE NILE DELTA. WITH ME ARE *BAST*, LADY OF CATS, AND *BES*, A HOUSEHOLD DEITY.

WE SEEK THE *GRANT* OF THE *LAND* THAT WAS ONCE *LUCIFER'S*.

I AM *AZAZEL*, FORMERLY A *PRINCE OF HELL*. WITH ME ARE THE *MERKIN*, MOTHER OF SPIDERS, AND *CHORONZON*, ONCE A *DUKE* OF THE *EIGHTH CIRCLE*.

WE SEEK THE *RETURN* OF OUR *LANDS*.

TO HIS *SHAME*, THIS ONE IS *SUSANO-O-NO-MIKOTO*, "HIS BRAVE SWIFT IMPETUOUS MALE AUGUSTNESS," *SON* OF *IZANAGI*, "HIS AUGUSTNESS THE MALE WHO INVITES." THIS ONE COMES *ALONE*.

THERE IS A *DISCUSSION* THAT MIGHT BE HAD AT SOME POINT, CONCERNING *TERRITORY*.

I HAVE THE *HONOR* TO BE THE PERSONAL *SLAVE* OF *LORD KILDERKIN*, A *MANIFESTATION* OF *ORDER*, HERE *INCARNATED* FOR US IN THE FORM OF THIS *CARDBOARD BOX*.

HE, *TOO*, WISHES TO *DISCUSS* THE *DISPOSAL* OF THE *REALM* THAT WAS ONCE *LUCIFER'S*.

I IS *SHIVERING JEMMY* OF THE *SHALLOW BRIGADE*, AND I IS A *PRINCESS* OF *CHAOS*, AND I IS *VERY IMPORTANT*, AND *WE* WANTS HELL *TOO*.

THAT'S WHAT.

I am the angel Remiel, set over those that Rise. My companion is Duma, angel of Silence.

We are here to observe.

You are all Welcome. Enter.

I welcome you to the Heart of the Dreaming. I extend my hospitality to you all.

Suites for you are being prepared, and your wishes regarding nourishment and recreation will be catered for, insofar as we are able to provide.

You all, or almost all, seek the same thing: this key, and what it represents:

The empty Hell that once was Lucifer's.

But you have journeyed far to come here this day.

You will be shown to your rooms. Tonight there will be a banquet, for you, and for any others who may arrive meanwhile.

And tomorrow...

...we'll talk.

To Be Continued

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES
#1 BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

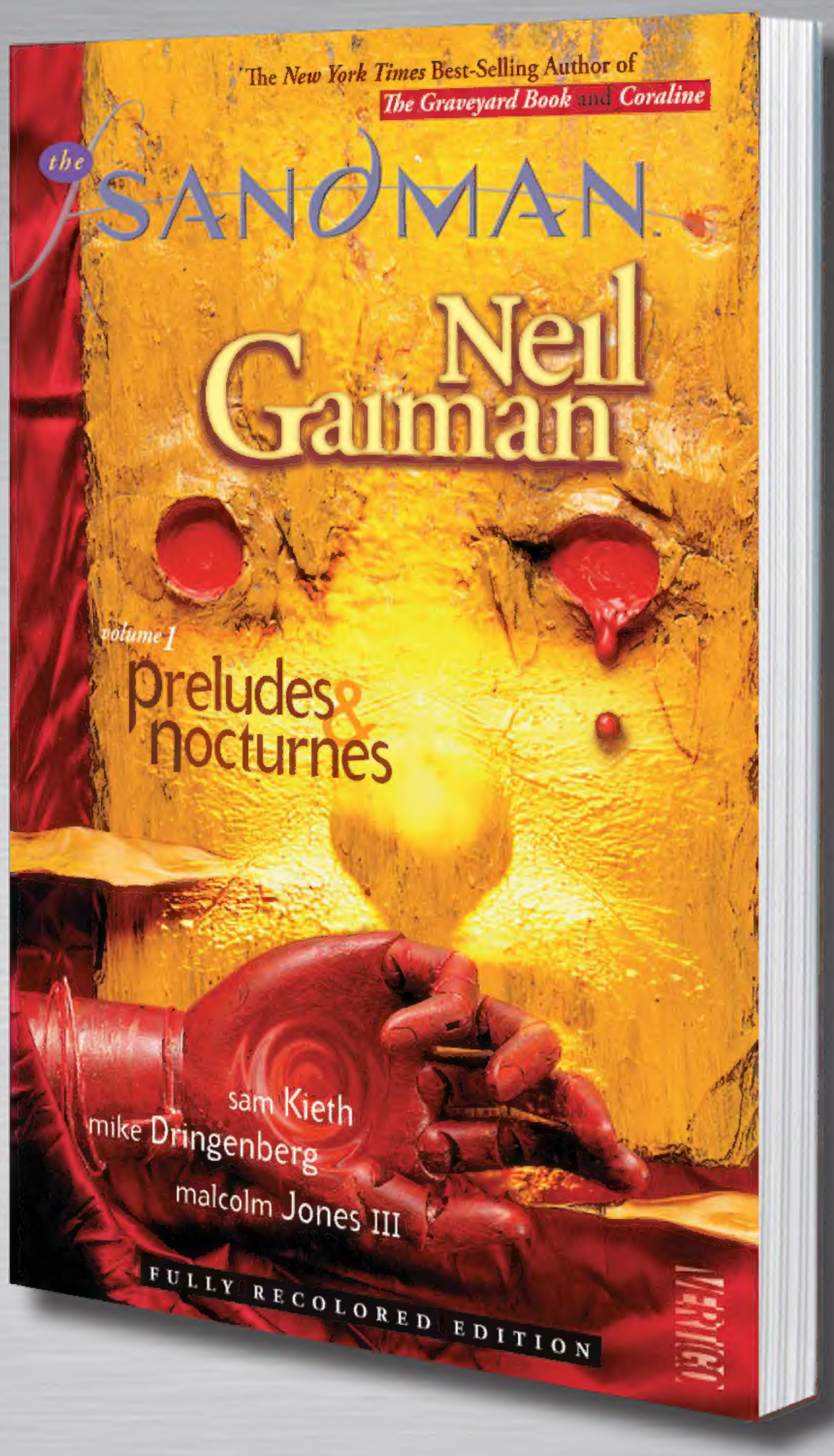
NEIL GAIMAN

"What Gaiman has written is a comics masterpiece."
– PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

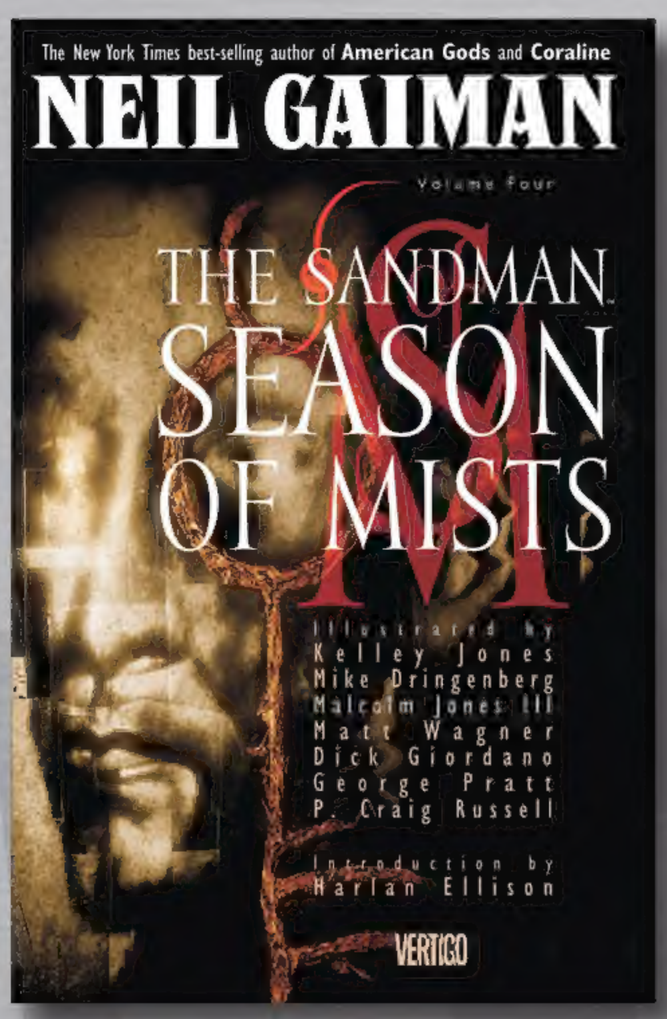
"SANDMAN just might be the smartest comic book ever written."
– USA TODAY

"The landmark comic-book series that actually made death seem cool."
– ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

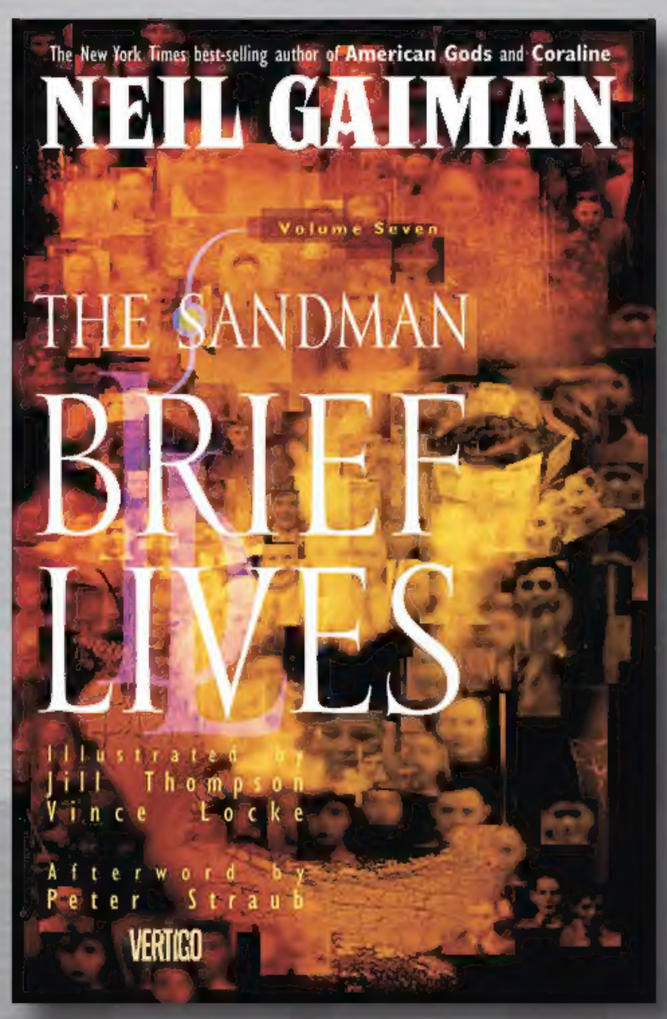
"This is the stuff dreams are made of."
– IGN.com



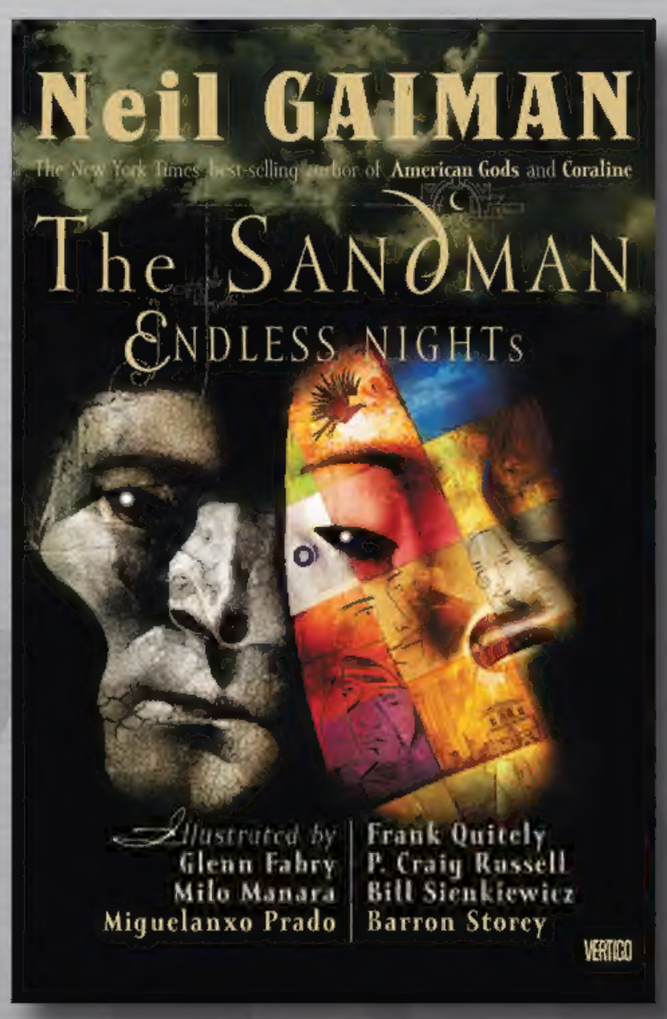
THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
SEASON OF MISTS



THE SANDMAN VOL. 7:
BRIEF LIVES



THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES**!

Suggested for Mature Readers

E
E
M
P
I
R
SON OF ULTRON